

COLLOQUY

Webster's Dictionary defines colloquy as mutual discourse. Readers are encouraged to submit additions, corrections, and comments about earlier articles appearing in Word Ways. Comments received up to a month prior to publication of an issue will appear in that issue.

John Edward Ogden of Yorktown Heights, New York recently communicated to the editor the well-mixed sixteen-letter transposal pair THERMONASTICALLY - HEMATOCRYSTALLIN, the first word found in Webster's Third, the second in Webster's Second. Note that the two words have only three bigrams (he, st, ll) in common; no sixteen-letter well-mixed transposal pairs (and only one seventeen-letter one) were listed in the February 1976 Word Ways article on this topic.

Jeff Grant belatedly adds 'fideicide' (a faith-destroyer), 'floricide' (a flower-destroyer), 'hericide' (the murder to a lord or master) and 'intercide' (to interrupt) to George Scheetz's "Onomasticon II" in the February Word Ways. All words can be found in the OED.

Ed Wolpow suggests a name for a barber shop owned by an incompetent and alienated Vietnam veteran: Tete Offensive. Anne Kirby sends in Hairotica from the Palo Alto directory. From London, Darryl Francis adds Dyes and Dolls, Medusa, Blow Your Top, Get Ahead, Way Ahead, and Basil's Brush (Basil Brush, a fox, is a popular TV animal in Britain). Jeff Grant mentions a neighboring barber named Mr. Whisker. On Elm Street in Morristown, there are three shops in a row: Paul's Hair Stylists, Nicoli Bridals, Colonial Maternity Shop.

Errata: Jack Grieshaber caught an arithmetical error in "Lucky Nines": the G in the word GIRL is the seventh letter of the alphabet, not the eighth. Consequently, the first two magic numbers for GIRL become 1 and 6, not 2 and 1; the third, of course, remains 9. Charles Suhor and Jay Thompson noticed that the Rape of the Lock, a beauty parlor in "Hair-It-Is", was wrongly attributed to Shakespeare (who actually wrote The Rape of Lucrece). The latter commented wryly, "At first I thought the problem might involve someone who was anti-semantic, but -- since the title was taken from a Pope -- I have decided that we have here a case of cathochresis".

A Strange Paradox from A. Wilansky: a sharp speech can be a blunt one.

Jeff Grant adds 'mirthquake' (an entertainment exciting convulsive mirth) and 'aquake' (quaking) to Darryl Francis' "Quakes" in the May issue; both can be found in the OED Supplement. He has seen the term 'birthquake' used to describe the population explosion, but does not recall the source.

Peggy Smith responds to Margaret Weiss's query in the February 1979 Kickshaws: "Somewhere or other I learned that the term for words like 'nocent' (innocent) and 'couth' (uncouth) is lost positive". By analogy with 'nonce', Jeremiah Farrell suggests reviving the obsolete word 'unce' (a claw), calling these unce words.

Jeff Grant adds to Ralph Beaman's "Twice in Fivers" with rugHH (rough), hoWWe (hoe) and trYYs, all in the OED, shiQQ in Everyman's Dictionary of Non-Classical Mythology, and TThur (and staVV (stave) in the English Dialect Dictionary. If placenames are allowed, more gaps can be filled: aXiXa, JuraJ. The article failed to mention that the doubled letters could not be used elsewhere in the word; this condition disqualifies Tom Pulliam's pFifF and HHeth in the May Colloquy.

Jeremiah Farrell believes that R. Robinson Rowe's word ladders connecting a word with its reversal can be constructed so that each word in the ladder appears in both normal and reversed form:

tram, trap, trop, trot, toot, tort, port, part, mart
flog, flow, flew, slew, stew, step, seep, sees, pees, pets, wets,
wels, welf, wolf, golf
loops, loots, poots, ports, parts, darts, dirts, diras, doras, soras,
sodas, sadas, sados, saros, sarod, sarid, strid, strad, strap,
strop, stoop, stool, spool

In "Convertible English" in the May issue, Richard Lederer offered a list of 77 noun-verb pairings, such as 'addict', that undergo a shift of stress and sometimes a change in vowel pronunciation when the part of speech is changed. To these he adds a few recent discoveries: convict, discard, discourse, recall, record, refill, refund, segment. His list of three-syllable words with this pattern can be augmented by a group of over- words: overdraft, overflow, overlap, overlay. Jeremiah Farrell adds to the ambiguous headlines with POLISH OBJECT TO CONDUCT (not an international squabble, but instructions on how to generate static electricity). In Milton Wright's 1939 book, What's Funny and Why, sentences like MOTHER WAS A COMIC STRIP ARTIST appear.

Ralph Beaman adds a footnote to the Starbuck coinage 'broughammed' mentioned in the May Colloquy: if Women's Wear Daily (May 9, 1979) can report that Givenchy "Concorded into New York Monday for work and play threw a dancing dinner Monday night ...", why can't he then have been broughammed to the party?

By using a wider set of dictionaries, two readers have extended the word strings reported by Tom Pulliam in the May Word Ways. Jeff Grant proposes the 22-letter word string of three-letter words GJUDZOSTWNEVRYMPHILACK, only four letters short of the theoretical maximum of 26. 'Gju' is in Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary, and 'udz', 'evr' and 'ymp' are early forms of uds, ever and imp in the OED; the others can be found in Webster's Second or the OED ('mph' in the OED Supplement). Jeremy Morse extends ATOMENDS to TOGAMENDS, and ALINERT to CLOVERST, by using only one word from the Concise Oxford Dictionary in each word string.

Marjorie Friedman points out that MONOPOLY can be viewed as the combination of the two prefixes mono- (one, alone) and poly- (many), hence yet another apparently self-contradictory word. Tom Pulliam adds UNDEROVERLOOKER, listed without definition in Webster's Second.

If one is not constrained to form a meaningful sentence, but simply supply a sequence of words, Tom Pulliam's 16-crash with the alphabet in the May Colloquy, A BaD EgG HiT KLM wiPeRS Two WaYs, can be increased to 24 crashes. Jeff Grant suggests ABC, DEF, GHI, JuL, MN, OP, QRS, TUV, WaYZ. 'Op' is in the Webster's Third Addenda, 'qrs' is found in qrs complex in Webster's Third, 'mn' is a variant of min in the OED Supplement, and 'wayz' (a bundle of straw) is mentioned in a 1731 quotation in the OED under wayzgoose.

William Sunners discovered that ArsEnIOUs appears in the Funk & Wagnalls Standard Collegiate Dictionary and hence should be added to Dave Shulman's list of AEIOU words in "An AEIOU Examination" in May.

Improving Philip Cohen's "Terminal Bigrams" in the February 1979 issue, Jeff Grant suggests the English Dialect Dictionary words RRog (seaweed) and gaZB (breath, wind), and the OED words avanGC (variant of 'afanc', an aquatic monster in Celtic mythology) and z-zZP (used to represent a buzzing sound). The last can be found in an 1893 quotation under the 4th paragraph of definitions for the letter Z.

Charles Suhor wonders if Joseph Califano and the Surgeon General might want to make something of the fact that 'trash' converts to 'ash tray' in Pig Latin.

More additions and improvements for Parts 1 and 2 of "Word Ways Challenges" have been received; all unattributed ones were sent in by Jeff Grant. Summarizing by section:

Transpositions: Two 12-letter transpositions of US placenames into dictionary words are Saint Maurice/aneurismatic and East Claridon/

declarations; a 13-letter transposition is Cedar Mountain/documentarian (Charles Holding). A 10-letter transposition of one US place-name into another is Coatsville/Vallecitos (Charles Holding). These five towns are found in LA, OH, NC, MO and NM, respectively. The letters AEST transpose into at least 16 words: aest, aets, aset, ates, east, eats, Esta, etas, saet, sate, seat, seta, stea, taes, tase, teas. Aets (eats), saet and stea are in the English Dialect Dictionary, Esta is a feminine given name in Evelyn Wells' What to Name the Baby, and the others are in the OED. The inflectionless shiftwords straungere/estraunger can be beaten by espirituell/spirituelle, early OED spellings of espiritual and spiritual.

Sight and Sound: There are quite a few 10-letter one-syllable words in the English Dialect Dictionary, such as screetched, screeched, scroached, scrouched, sprounced, squaitched, squawtched and strootched. In the OED scietched, strounced and strengthened can be found. These are exceeded by the 11-letter spleatched (variant of 'splatched', or splashed) in the English Dialect Dictionary, and by streynghthes (an early form of 'strengths') in the OED. The 15-letter two-syllable word straight-grained is matched by straight-tongued (honest) in the OED, and bettered by the 17-letter squaitched-mouthed (lying, deceitful) in the English Dialect Dictionary. Two other OED 15-letter two-syllable words are straight-stocked and straight-through (Jeremy Morse).

Scrabble: zy (OED) = 28 is the best two-letter first move in Scrabble, and zyx (OED) = 46 beats 'quiz', which is only 44 points. For a five-letter word, quizz (Webster's Second) = 68.

The Scrabble Cube arrangement given at the right scores 116 points; all words can be found in Webster's Second or the OED. The 100 Scrabble tiles can be formed into six words by using Rudolf Ondrejka's 52-letter chemical term ("A Sampler of Long Words" May 1979) together with overtalkativeness, bejigged, axofugal, bud-die (Webster's Third), and squawweed; both blanks represent P.

H	M				
	W	A	Q	F	
		K	U	Y	
				Z	A
					C
				H	Y

Word Ladders: ECRU is proposed as an isolano (a word that cannot be changed into another by a single letter-substitution) with respect to Webster's Second and Third (Edward Wolpow). ZIIM, in Webster's Second, and UKAZ (a variant of 'ukase' in Webster's Third) may also be isolanos with respect to these dictionaries. UMPH is believed to be an isolano with respect to the OED (but 'umps' may appear in the Supplement not yet issued). There are probably many obsolete words in the OED that are isolanos, such as UMFF (early form of 'umph') and TPRW (the sound of a horn). In the original "Word Networks" article in May and August 1973, only those Pocket Dictionary words were allowed which were not labelled as abbreviations and which actually appeared in boldface; thus, most plurals, past tenses, participles, etc. were excluded. If inferred words are allowed, MATES has 19 near neighbors (bates, dates, fates, gates, hates, pates, rates, sates, metes, mites, motes, mutes, maces, makes, males, manes, mares, mazes, mated), and one can find seven-letter word ladders of minimum

length in which the first and last words have no letters in common in the same position: settler-settles-settees-setters-betters-batters-banters-banners and buttry-butters-putters-puttees-putties-patties-parties-parries (Jeremy Morse). Similarly, using Webster's Second the following minimum-length eight-letter word ladder can be found: shippons-shippens-shippers-slippers-clippers-clappers-clampers-clambers-clamberd. In a future article, Jeff Grant exhibits words from two to ten letters in length having a maximum number of OED near neighbors.

Word Squares: A 2-by-19 crossword has been constructed, using words in Webster's Second or Third (except for 'ze' in the OED, 'iv' in the English Dialect Dictionary, and 'Oa' in the Times Index-Gazetteer). The double word square on the right uses only three different letters, with all words in the OED ('esste' under este, 'stett' under stete, and 'seest' under the verb see).

OVERCAPITALIZATIONS
AUTHORITATIVE NESSES

S	E	E	S	T
T	E	S	T	E
E	S	S	E	E
T	E	E	T	S
E	S	S	T	E

Insertions, Deletions: The word 'prestable' can be successively beheaded to a single letter using words from Webster's Second. The 10-letter word 'prestrains' can be similarly beheaded, but two words are found in other dictionaries ('estrains' in the OED, 'ns' in Webster's Third). The 14-letter 'strengthenings' can be deleted successively down to a single letter, using words from the OED: strengthenings, strengthening, strengthning (an early spelling of 'strengthening', in several OED citations), strengthing (supporting), strengthing (making strong or stronger), strenging (present participle of 'streng', an early form of the verb 'streng'), strening (copulating), streing (an early form of 'string'), string, sting, sing, sin, in, I. 'Sheathers' can be either beheaded or curtailed in any order down to one letter. The words 'th' and 'hea' are dialectic forms of the and he in the English Dialect Dictionary, 'rs' is in Webster's Third, 'ath' and 'athe' are early spellings of oath in the OED, 'ather' is an old form of adder in the OED, and 'heathe' is an early spelling of heath in the OED given in a 1626 citation. All other substrings can be found in the OED.

Scrambled Alphabets: 'Wertuall' (an early spelling of virtual in the OED) is a typewriter-keyboard order word of eight letters, and 'chapytre' (an early spelling of chapter in the OED) is a reverse-keyboard word of nine letters.

Transdeletions, Transadditions: The two-letter word UU has been found (under yew) in the OED. MOHAIREs is a set of eight letters forming 35 different pairs of four-letter words; a forthcoming article by Jeff Grant demonstrates this in more detail.